

What Does a Global Education Demand?

New Students Academic Day
President's Convocation
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This Academic Convocation for new students marks the beginning of your SU education. Welcome to your college education. Thank you for choosing us.

Welcome also to the new experience of learning from and with professors. Professors all live with, have studied for years, seek to communicate, and hope you will pick up on an intellectual passion. They not only know more about something than almost anyone else in the world, but they want you to know about, and come alive to it. This will be a new intellectual experience for you; give yourself to it.

I like to say find and follow the intellectual passion of one, or two, or maybe three professors, find what makes them passionate, follow their intellectual passion until you find your own intellectual passion, a passion of the mind that you will follow all of your life.

Our slogan at Seattle U is "Connecting the mind to what matters". What will matter to you? Learn from your professors how to connect your mind to it, and I can guarantee you that your heart, soul, imagination, feeling, creativity, faith, and even your body will also be connected with what really matters to you. What an exciting adventure: to begin the journey of a college education, to become passionate about learning what really matters, to have professors as the companions for your journey.

I would like to suggest today that more than any college students before you, you are beginning a global education, an education about the world, an education in the world, an education here and abroad, on a campus and within a global local community, a global education that will take you far from home and very much back home to yourself, an education in and with the peoples of the world and an education with your classmates, your new friends, and with yourself when you are alone. Yours will be a global education for your global future.

Let me start with an illustration you may already have heard from me, but is worth repeating. If you take the entire population of 6.5 billion people in the world of today, and reduce it to a village of 100, while keeping intact the proportions of the population of the actual world, who would be in the village of 100?

THE WORLD AS AVILLAGE OF 100

60	Asians
12	Europeans
5	U. S. A.
8	Latin Americans
14	Africans
51	Males
49	Females
18	White
33	Christians
67	Unable to read
24	No electricity
50	Malnourished
33	Without clean drinking water
82	Experienced war, or been in prison, or been tortured or suffered famine
75	Have a meal in the refrigerator and have shoes and a bed and roof overhead
50	Able to go to church, mosque, synagogue, temple without fear of arrest or harassment
7	Access to the internet
5	Own 32% of the village's wealth
1	With a college degree

If only one in a hundred gets a college education, what an opportunity, what a privilege you are setting out on today. Prize it; treasure it. And if only one in a hundred gets a college education, and you are that one, then it just must be that God intends you to use your college education not only for yourself, but also to serve the other 99 in your village.

By the way, it is curious to look at how many were in the village of 100 in the past and how many will be in it in the future. Our world is changing and your college education must be adequate to that change.

The village in the past:

1000 BC	1
500 BC	2
1 AD	3
1000	5
1500	8
1650	10
1800	17
1900	32
2007	100

The village in the future

2100 200

2150 250

What is an education that is adequate to the world of today and the world of your future? What will be a good global education for you, guided by your professors, maybe with classmates who will become your colleagues of a world-class and world-worth education? Because you who are starting college now stand more at the edge of the new world emerging, you more than anyone else, even your professors, will have to author and take ownership of your global education. You will need to lead and show the way.

The challenge of a good, even a great, global education is huge, incredibly exciting, perhaps overwhelming.

I serve on the board of trustees of a school of the highest academic excellence and ambitions. I happen to serve on their special “Global Service Learning Committee”. As an insider I know what their expectations are for the learning and developmental outcomes of their students in global education. Listen and ask yourself what you think and what you feel about their list of what students need from global education.

What students need from global education

Knowledge of:

Geography
 Macroeconomics
 History and political systems
 Sustainability both economic and environmental
 Development
 Culture and religion

Skills in:

Analyzing complexity
 Oral and written proficiency in at least one other modern language
 Ability to negotiate
 Use of technology for communicating
 “Social IQ”
 Media literacy
 Ability to identify bias

Attributes of:

Resourcefulness

Withstand challenges of “foreignness”

Active listening

Collaboration and team problem solving

Artistic and language skills

Resilience and adaptability

Ability to stay centered and function without Western comforts

“Can do” attitude of agency

Integrity, ethical mind and spirit

Attitudes of:

Comfort with complexity

Polycentric approach

Willingness to grow beyond preexisting understandings

Curious, open minded, lifelong learning

Respectfulness

Healthy skepticism

Self-confidence, empathy, compassion

Humor and optimism

That’s all! What I think about it is that it is an extraordinarily impressive, and comprehensive, and helpful set of standards and goals for global education. I say “yes” to every item on that list. But wow!

What I feel in a thinking way and think in a feeling way—which is the Jesuit way—about it is that there is something missing, something very big, and it is not one more thing on the list, rather something—at least for a Jesuit education like ours—is missing from the heart, the core of what a global education is all about. What I think is missing is:

- How will the center hold for the student who is educated with and takes on all of these demands, skills, attributes, attitudes, and all this knowledge? I don’t think the student needs more; but the student needs to have a center, a core, a soul, that will hold all of this and still hold together.
- I believe to be globally educated a student needs to be religiously grounded, spiritually rooted, and by that I don’t mean only that he or she needs to know more and more about religious and spirituality, but needs to have, and to know, and to be grounded in his or her own religion, faith, and spirituality. Only in this way do I believe the center of the person as a globally educated citizen can hold together.

- Another way of saying this is that in the global education you are embarking on, not only do you need to travel far, but you need to be able to come home to yourself and to find and have a home in yourself into which you can welcome this world you learn about. You need:
 - an interior temple
 - a synagogue within
 - a religious sanctuary
 - a faith space
 - a church of peace within

A global education is the education of the self but it will not hold or be real, will not be grounded or last unless it is at the same time the education of a stillness within. A real education can only stick to what is still within you, and a global education must revolve around a grounded still point, a staying at home in yourself in order to be able to go everywhere. By the way, we have a Core Curriculum at Seattle U. not only because we believe it is the core of a good education but because we believe you as a student have a core that needs to be educated.

Let me tell you a story to conclude. I once participated in a workshop in Frascati outside of Rome. There were about fifteen of us. We were asked to introduce ourselves and to say how we became the person we were. One person who introduced herself was named “Sor Virginia”, i.e. Sister Virginia. She was a Trappistine Nun who lived a contemplative, enclosed life in a monastery. She said she came from a well-to-do family and that when she was young she was able to travel to many cities and countries. She said she became obsessed with travelling, that she fell in love with going everywhere in the world. Then, one day, she came to the realization that she would never be able to satisfy this longing to go everywhere. She saw in an instant—as a grace from God—that the only way for her to go everywhere was to go to one place, to stay there, to pray there, to be deeply and fully there, to be in God there. For that reason she became a Trappistine Nun and was resolved to live her entire life in one monastery and in this way to be—as she believed she was—everywhere! “Sor Virginia” may be an extreme example but she knows something we need know. She knows something about what a global education calls for.

Can you, in your global education in addition to acquiring this knowledge, these skills, attitudes, and attributes, develop the solitude, the peace in yourself, the staying still, that places you at the heart of the world, the heart of God’s world, the world God loves, the God who is within the temple of your stillness? Go out to the world in your SU education, but also let the world come home, come in, to you and find rest in you. Come home to your own soul, the inviolable sanctuary that enshrines your very self. Now that’s a fully global education, a fully Jesuit global education.

Enter into it; enjoy it; take us along on your global and personal educational journey.